

Message Text

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SUBJECT: KEIDANREN LEADERS DISCUSS OVERSEAS COMMUNICATION

REF: TOKYO 07383

1. THE MARCH 1978 "KEIDANREN MONTHLY BULLETIN" (KEIDANREN GEPPU) CARRIED A TRANSCRIPT OF A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION INDICATING THAT THIS INFLUENTIAL ECONOMIC BODY HAS CREATED AN INFORMATION COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE AN OVERSEAS INFORMATION EFFORT SUPPLEMENTING INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFORTS OF INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS AND SEPARATE JAPANESE CORPORATIONS. HOWEVER, THE DISCUSSION MADE CLEAR THAT KEIDANREN HAS IN MIND NOT JUST MORE PR, BUT A BROAD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM ADDRESSING BASIC FOREIGN MISCONCEPTIONS OF JAPANESE SOCIETY AND CULTURE.

2. KEIDANREN VICE PRESIDENTS IWASA AND HANAMURA PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED THE PROBLEMS JAPAN FACES DUE TO CULTURAL DIFFERENCES WITH OTHER NATIONS AND DUE TO THE LANGUAGE BARRIER. IWASA SAID PAST GOJ CULTURAL
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PROGRAMS HAVE OVER-EMPHASIZED TRADITIONAL CULTURAL FORMS LIKE KABUKI AND NOH AND HAVE NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH IN MAKING MODERN JAPANESE SOCIETY AND JAPANESE THINKING BETTER UNDERSTOOD ABROAD.

3. TOYOTA AUTO SALES CORP. PRESIDENT KATO STRESSED THE HIGH VALUE OF EXCHANGES OF PERSONS AND CALLED FOR MORE

"PERSONAL RELATIONS" INSTEAD OF MORE "PUBLIC RELATIONS."
HE ALSO HELD THAT THE "COMMUNICATION IMBALANCE" BIWEEN
AMERICA AND JAPAN IS AS SERIOUS AS THE TRADE IMBALANCE:
FAR TOO LITTLE INFORMATION ON JAPAN IS AVAILABLE IN THE
UNITED STATES. THIS LINE WAS SECONDED BY NIPPON KOKAN
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STEEL CORPORATION VICE PRES. TAKANO, WHO MAINTAINED THAT
MUCH OF THE PROBLEM FOR JAPANESE STEEL IMPORTS INTO THE
U.S. DERIVES FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE NOT HAVING CURRENT
INFORMATION ON JAPAN'S SITUATION, SO THAT ISOLATED
PRACTICES BECOME INTERPRETED AS TYPIFYING THE WHOLE AND
AMERICAN TRADE POLICY DECISIONS HAVE TO BE BASED ON GUESS
AND CONJECTURE.

4. KEIDANREN V-P HANAMORI EMPHASIZED THAT JAPAN, TOO,
NEEDS BETTER DATA ON THE THINKING OF OTHER PEOPLES AND
SAID KEIDANREN ITSELF SHOULD WORK ON THIS PROBLEM. HE
CLOSED THE DISCUSSION BY SAYING IT WOULD BE KEIDANREN'S
TASK "TO CREATE A CLIMATE INTERNATIONALLY IN WHICH
(JAPANESE)BUSINESS CIRCLES AS A WHOLE CAN FUNCTION
SMOOTHLY.

5. ICA-JAPAN HAS HEARD THAT GOJ MINISTRIES CONCERNED
WITH OVERSEAS ECONOMIC RELATIONS HAVE APPROACHED DENTSU,
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JAPAN'S LARGEST ADVERTISING AGENCY, ABOUT DEVELOPING AN
OVERSEAS INFORMATION STRATEGY DEALING WITH JAPAN'S
PROBLEMS IN ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS. IT
THUS APPEARS THAT BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE
SECTOR HERE HAVE DEVELOPED NEW AWARENESS OF THE POTENTIAL
OF PLANNED AND COORDINATED INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION
EFFORTS. FORSTER

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